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LOCAL NEWS

Library event shows that kids dig dinosaurs



Thomas Metthe/Reporter-News Kids and their parents get their instruction sheets for the Paleontology School: Dinosaur Dig on Friday at the South Branch of the Abilene Public Library.

By Dan Carpenter, Special to the Reporter-News

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About 200 children and their parents got to "dig" for dinosaurs Friday at the South Branch of the Abilene Public Library as part of the library's Summer Reading Club series.

The dinosaur dig was the last of four sessions of the paleontology school set up as part of Read-a-saurus, the library's reading club for kids.

"This looks like the largest turnout of all the sessions we've had this

summer, said Alyssa Crow, children's librarian. "We've spent three sessions teaching them how to become junior paleontologists for our Summer Reading Club, and today, we turned the entire library into a dinosaur dig where they could make their way around and do activities related to dinosaurs."

Each child had the opportunity to visit one of five dino-specific sites and complete an activity or create a craft, Crow said.

"We wanted the kids to have fun, enjoy themselves and learn something educational today," Crow said. "We also want to draw them back to the library to learn even more after the activity days are over."

Abilene resident Christina Rollins, who brought daughters Ciera and Savannah to Friday's activity, and said she appreciated the library's effort.

"We've been able to make three of the four sessions this summer," Rollins said. "It has been really fun to see them having fun, working together and learning something. I also love that it is a free activity."

Savannah, 8, said she most enjoyed the fossil identification site, during which participants used paint brushes to look for "fossils" buried in a tub filled with sand. She also said she liked doing the activities with her sister.

"Things like this help us learn, and Ciera and I work together to complete them," said Savannah, who attends Jackson Elementary. "I'm going to complete the junior workbook and get my badge and certificate too."

After completing the activity stations, youngsters received a prize, a reading champion sign, and a "junior paleontologist" workbook. After completing the workbook, the child can mail it in and receive an official Junior Paleontologist badge from the National Park

Service.

Crow noted that an added benefit of the reading clubs has been an increase in the number of books checked out from the library, but not the types one typically might expect from children.

"It's been really cool to see the number of nonfiction books the kids are checking out," she said. "We've seen more of those go out than some of the traditional children's books about dinosaurs."

Crow said she already is preparing for next year's summer series, which will take place in the library's new location in the Mall of Abilene.

"We should be moving in there sometime this fall," she said, noting that the move will more than quadruple the amount of the library branch's space over the current 5,000 square feet of its location on South Danville Drive. "As soon as we get the theme decided for next year, we'll get busy designing the summer series."

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